



Center for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage

TELESCOPE - MESSENGER

United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio

Vol. 8 no. 2

Summer 1998

GOD'S OASIS IN THE DESERT

by Dee Dee Heffner

It was a warm August morning, 1960, in the high mountain valley country of northern New Mexico. Dr. Glen McCracken, superintendent of the Edith M. McCurdy Mission School, was giving a tour of the campus to an Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) pastor and his family from the Ohio Southeast Conference. As they walked across the irrigation ditch above the barn which housed Dr. McCracken's prize-winning Poland China hogs, the superintendent shared a favorite anecdote. Several years before, Dr. McCracken, also an ordained United Brethren (UB) and then EUB minister, was performing a wedding in the chapel at McCurdy. A child at the service said in a loud whisper, "Look, Mama! There's the man that feeds the pigs." Also during the tour on that August day, Dr. McCracken asked the 13-year old PK (preacher's kid) what she planned to do after high school. When he learned that she hoped to attend Otterbein College and become a teacher, he told her, "Maybe God is calling you to come to McCurdy as a missionary teacher." God was indeed speaking through Dr. McCracken. The groundwork had been laid already, though, with the wonderful missionary education of the EUB church. This parsonage family was familiar with the Spanish-American work in New Mexico from articles in *The World Evangel* and in the children's curriculum, especially *Grow Magazine*.



Seven years later, in 1967 between her sophomore and junior years at Otterbein, that EUB PK from Ohio Southeast, Dee Dee Krumm Heffner,

daughter of Carol and Delbert Krumm (Otterbein '49 and Bonebrake '53) spent the summer in New Mexico as a summer project worker or special project worker (SP). She and Marlene Lansman Deringer (daughter of Quentin and Darlene Lansman, also EUB leaders) worked on playgrounds sponsored by Espanola Valley Community Activities (EVCA). EVCA's director was Keith Megill, another UB and then EUB PK who was the son of Pearl and Harold Megill from Kansas. Marlene and Dee Dee also taught in Santa Cruz Church's Vacation Bible School with Miss Delia Herrick. Many Sundays they went to Vallecitos to church with Dr. McCracken, who was the preacher there for the summer, since A. W. Pringle was working with mission youth teams in Indiana. One Sunday on the way down the mountain from Vallecitos, the trio had to wait in the car until an unusually large herd of cattle crossed the road. Driving that herd, on horseback, was Dr. Henry Martinez, a 1947 McCurdy School graduate and now a well-known Amarillo heart surgeon. What a close family there was in the EUB Church! Lives twined and intertwined.

I was that Ohio Southeast PK, and after my summer in the mission in New Mexico, I was sure that God was calling me to be a missionary there as well. Now, however, there was a significant young man in my life, Dennis Heffner, also an Otterbein student. Dennis' mother Erladean was preparing for the ministry with the EUB course of study. During the summer of 1968 Dennis led a team of Otterbein College students to northern New Mexico to work with EVCA playgrounds. God's call to serve in the Land of Enchantment came to Dennis as well.

We graduated from Otterbein in 1969 and were married in 1970, while Dennis was a student at United Theological Seminary. At John Knecht's

request, I became a librarian at UTS. With strong encouragement from our mentors at United, especially Calvin Reber, missions professor, and Ken Pohly, who had been with us at Otterbein and assisted in our wedding, we returned to New Mexico for Dennis' internship during the 1970-72 school years. Dale Robinson, superintendent of McCurdy from 1965-1983, hired me to teach English at McCurdy High School--and introduced us to late-night trips up the mountain to Truchas to see the stars. (He also took visitors, including my parents, across State Route 100, between El Rito and Vallecitos, during which the passengers often had to step out of the vehicle to rebuild the road.) Dennis worked in all of the mission churches, one month at a time, under the supervision of Richard Campbell, pastor of Santa Cruz. In addition, he spent a month at McCurdy and another month at the Espanola Hospital, still operated by the United Methodist Church, and with some missionary staff remaining.

After returning to Ohio for three years, in 1975 we moved to the Espanola Valley as commissioned missionaries. Although we have served as missionaries only since the birth of the United Methodist Church, the UB and EUB heritages surround us. We are grateful that the Gospel of Jesus Christ continues to be proclaimed in northern New Mexico through McCurdy School and the six churches that now are Group Ministry of Northern New Mexico. Despite changing times, I feel close to Millie Perkins, the deaconess who came to Velarde to begin a Sunday School and a school in October of 1912.

We cherish friendships with many of those UB and EUB missionaries who came to New Mexico through the 1950s and gave many years of service. Our lives have been touched by Glen and Violet McCracken, Rev. Al Brandstetter, Irene Cole, Gwen and Dolph Pringle, Mary Lue Warner, Avis Williams, Ada Beringer, Ruth Clausius, Lois Coover, Leona Wilken, Georgene McDonald, Nellwyn Brookhart Trujillo, Enoch and Eustie Rodriquez, Ruth Stambach, Joyce Rohde Sass, Erwin Van Essen, Candido and Ethel Medina, and Chic and Velma Martinez. Both Candido Medina and Chic Martinez were in the first graduating class at McCurdy (1926), went to York College, and

returned to be on staff at McCurdy.

We are fortunate to continue the legacy of the work of the UB and EUB churches in northern New Mexico. Today the three plaza schools at Velarde, Vallecitos and Alcalde are closed. However, the Santa Cruz campus, McCurdy, has 475 students in kindergarten through grade twelve and offers a quality education with a Christian emphasis, still using Luke 2:52 as our motto. The Espanola Hospital, now part of Presbyterian Hospital System, just celebrated its 50th anniversary as it provides full-service health care in the one-hundred-bed facility. The six churches--Taos, El Rito (which O. T. Deever helped to build in 1964), Hernandez, Velarde, Alcalde, Santa Cruz and Valley View are engaged in creative ministries across northern New Mexico. Irene Cole, a UB PK from West Virginia, arrived as a missionary to McCurdy School in 1944, freshly graduated from Otterbein College. She has served here more than fifty years as a teacher, librarian, administrative assistant to the superintendent, and Volunteer in Mission. Irene says that she sees McCurdy and the other work of the church here as an oasis. Not only are we an oasis of irrigated green lawns in this high desert country but also we have been and continue to be a spiritual oasis for the people of northern New Mexico. Dennis and I are thankful that God has called us to share in the heritage of the work begun here in 1912 by the United Brethren Church and nurtured by the Evangelical United Brethren tradition from 1946 to 1968.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Dee Dee Heffner is a Home Missionary at McCurdy School who travels the country interpreting the work of the mission in northern New Mexico.

Darrell Reeck is Executive Secretary of the United Methodist Development Fund and a scholar who has researched Sierra Leone history.

Arthur C. Core's book on Otterbein is a product of his longtime teaching of EUB history at UTS. He has served on the Heritage Center's Advisory Board since its beginning and lives at Otterbein Home, Lebanon, Ohio.

THE SPIRIT OF AMISTAD IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH*

by Darrell Reeck

Imagine that the year is 1839. Imagine the revolt of fifty-three weakened, enslaved African captives being transshipped around the island of Cuba. Imagine them overpowering their well-armed captors and setting sail for Africa--and freedom. If you imagine these things, you'll be recreating history. With Steven Spielberg's film *Amistad* you can more than imagine; you can experience a modern retelling of an exhilarating liberation story.

United Methodists around the world have a vital connection with the Amistad incident. Today, in West Africa, The United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone has more than 85,000 members. This modern Sierra Leone Annual Conference has important historical links with the Amistad revolt that took place 159 years ago.

Amistad: The Story

In 1839, the captives below decks wanted only to return to their homes in what is now Sierra Leone. After successfully overpowering the crew, they set sail for Africa. Inadvertently, however, they drifted north to Long Island Sound, where they were arrested by the US Coast Guard. There the foreign slaveholders caught up with them and demanded the United States return the slaves to a plantation in Cuba.

Almost immediately, American abolitionists intervened on behalf of the captives. These activists in the name of Christ provided housing and education and helped the captives gain widespread publicity while awaiting trial. They also arranged a defense when the government appealed the case before the United States Supreme Court. There, none other than former President John Quincy Adams argued the captives' case, pleading for their acquittal and freedom. Subsequently, the Supreme Court freed the Amistad captives in 1841.

This stunning victory defined the initial spirit of Amistad--setting captives free in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Amistad and Nineteenth-Century Mission Work

Even before repatriation, the abolitionists had

empowered a religious organization--the American Missionary Association (AMA)--to assist the newly liberated slaves. Representatives of the AMA accompanied the Amistad captives to West Africa. There, they set up a support center and Gospel-preaching outpost named Mo-Tappan near the Atlantic coast in southeast Sierra Leone. Thanks to the AMA, the spirit of Amistad expanded to include mission: the introducing of indigenous Africans to the Christian faith, along with support for their economic improvement.

Even so, high hopes for early progress soon faded. The African repatriates dispersed to their own scattered villages. Disease also took its toll on both Africans and missionaries. And life in the coastal villages around Mo-Tappan continued much as before. Still, over the years, the AMA won converts, built a small church membership, educated schoolchildren, and established small ancillary businesses, such as a sawmill.

Amistad and the United Brethren in Christ

In the 1850s, the Amistad story took a new turning. Back in the United States, the German-speaking Christians of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ were planning a missionary enterprise. As abolitionists, they were familiar with the Amistad incident and with Mo-Tappan. So, in 1855, they chose Sierra Leone for their new mission and located their first outpost adjacent to the territory of the American Missionary Association.

Difficulties of climate and disease almost killed their endeavor--and literally killed many of the missionaries who bravely sailed for West Africa. But in 1870, the United Brethren achieved a milestone when an American couple, Mary and Joseph Gomer, arrived in Sierra Leone from Ohio. These missionary-diplomats stayed in Africa for twenty-two years. Almost single-handedly, they turned imminent failure into great success.

As the United Brethren's mission program grew, the American Missionary Association decided to offer its entire franchise--with church buildings, schools, a farm, a sawmill, and an annual subsidy--to the United Brethren in Christ. Thus it was that by 1882 the spirit of Amistad had infused itself with the United Brethren mission. Despite setbacks and challenges, the United Brethren in Christ established

preaching points, churches, schools, and clinics in more and more villages.

Finally--as a result of denominational mergers in 1946 (joining the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Church) and 1968 (uniting the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church)--the mission in Sierra Leone emerged as the Sierra Leone Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Amistad and United Methodism

Today, more than 85,000 United Methodist Christians in Sierra Leone look back to the Amistad incident as a sign of partnership with Christians in the United States. The Sierra Leone Annual Conference currently has the largest membership to be found in any nation of northwest Africa.

In 1997, life in Sierra Leone became very difficult. On May 25, 1997, the democratically elected government was overthrown by a military coup. Since that time, thousands of people--including church leaders and medical personnel--have had to flee the country. Rebels have destroyed or vandalized parsonages, churches, schools, clinics, and other institutions; and the people of Sierra Leone have faced soaring food shortages and a health crisis.

But fortunately, the spirit of Amistad is still alive in Sierra Leone after a continuous presence of more than 150 years. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), part of the General Board of Global Ministries, has brought official disaster relief to the citizens of Sierra Leone, complementing the efforts of individual Christians and congregations. In the current crisis, ministry in the name of Christ is possible because a long, continuous line of Christians has sustained and extended the spirit of Amistad, responding effectively to new challenges over time.

To United Methodists around the world, as the Amistad film was released by a studio called DreamWorks, the spirit of Amistad remains a dreamwork in progress, taking on flesh in a real place in our time.

*A *New World Outlook* Online Article at <http://gbgm-umc.org>. Copyright 1997 by *New World Outlook*: The Mission Magazine of The United Methodist Church. Published by permission.

THANKS MARTI!!

Martha M. Anderson, Managing Editor of *T-M* issues from Winter 1996 through Winter 1998, reluctantly leaves this position due to her other responsibilities at the seminary. Now serving as Administrative Assistant to Dean Newell J. Wert, she has many more duties than she did previously. The editor has much appreciated her skilled and creative work, not only because she is very competent but also because she loves working with the EUB heritage. Fortunately I can still enjoy her friendly smile, pleasant voice, willing spirit and faithful contribution to UTS when I visit the Dean's office, but I shall miss her as a partner in publication. Thank you, Marti, for your many contributions as our Managing Editor.

CENTENNIAL OF MARTYRED MISSIONARIES

Shortly after the appearance of our last issue, we marked the passage of one hundred years since seven missionaries sent to Sierra Leone, West Africa, by the Women's Missionary Association of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, were slain as a result of an indigenous African uprising.

Massacred at Rotifunk, West Africa, May 3, 1898

1. Rev. I. N. Cain, A.B.
2. Mrs. I. N. Cain, A.B.
3. Miss Mary C. Archer, M.D.
4. Miss Marietta Hatfield, M.D.
5. Miss Ella Schenk

Massacred at Taiama, West Africa, May 8, 1898

6. Rev. Lowry A. McGrew
7. Mrs. Clara B. McGrew

Source: J. S. Mills, *Mission Work in Sierra Leone, West Africa*, (Dayton: U.B. Publishing House, 1898), p. 139.

BICENTENNIAL BACKGROUND

As noted in the Winter 1997 issue of *Telescope-Messenger*, the origins of the United Brethren in Christ and Evangelical Association began years prior to the official actions that established the denominations in 1800. Before we celebrate those bicentennial actions in 2000, it seems appropriate to provide background information about the primary founders of our heritage in this and subsequent issues.

The most renowned leader of our movement was Philip William Otterbein (1726-1813), a man born in Germany, educated at the pietist oriented Herborn Academy, and ordained by the German Reformed Church in 1749.

Three years later he responded to an appeal for missionaries to German settlers in America and devoted the rest of his ministry to such persons in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland. After serving several churches and sharing in the evangelical activities of



From the Wagoner Lithograph

Philip William Otterbein

of America's Great Awakening, Otterbein became the pastor of an independent German Reformed congregation in Baltimore in 1774, where he served till his death in 1813.

His evangelical zeal and style is evident in the twenty-eight articles of the "Constitution and Ordinances" adopted by the Baltimore congregation January 1, 1785. The following selections from that document reveal Otterbein's person-oriented pietism and his similarities to Methodism's individual salvation and small group nurture. Compare his style and spirit to that of John Wesley's "General Rules of the Methodist Church" (1739) that are found in every edition of the Methodist *Discipline* to the present.

THE CONSTITUTION AND ORDINANCES OF THE EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, 1785

By the undersigned preacher and members which now constitute this church, it is hereby ordained and resolved, that this church, which has been brought together in Baltimore, by the ministration of our present preacher, W. Otterbein, in future, consist in a preacher, three elders, and three deacons, an almoner [distributes alms] and church members, and these together shall pass under and by the name--The Evangelical Reformed church.

2d. No one whoever he may be, can be preacher or member of this church, whose walk is unchristian and offensive, or who lives in some open sin . . .

3d. Each church member must attend faithfully the public worship on the Sabbath day, and at all other times . . .

5th. The members of this church, impressed by the necessity of a constant religious exercise, suffering the word of God richly and daily to dwell among them . . . resolve that each sex shall hold meetings apart, once a week . . . In the absence of the preacher, an elder or deacon shall lead such meetings.

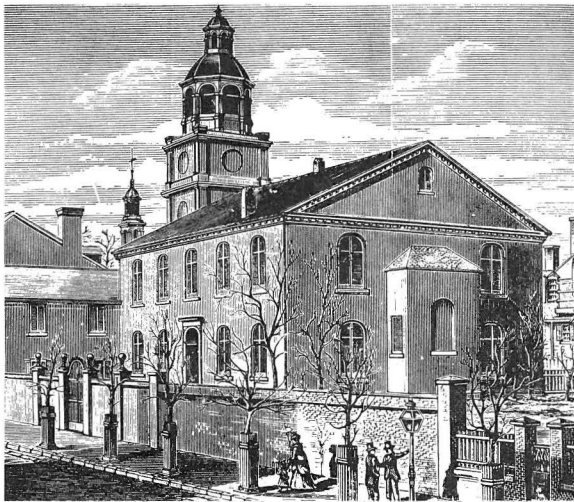
(a) The rules for these special meetings are these: No one can be received into them who is not resolved to flee from the wrath to come, and, by faith and repentance, to seek his salvation in Christ, and who is not resolved willingly to obey the disciplinary rules, which are now observed by this church, for good order, and advance in godliness. . . ; yet, always excepted, that such rules are founded on the WORD OF GOD which is the only unerring guide of faith and practice.

[Meetings began and ended with singing and prayer, and attendance was mandatory except for sickness or absence from home. Members were to "abstain from all backbiting and evil-speaking of any person," to "avoid all worldly and sinful company, and . . . shun all foolish talking and jesting," and were not permitted "to buy or sell on the Sabbath, nor attend to worldly business."]

6th. Persons expressing a desire to commune with us at the Lord's table, although they have not

been members of our church, shall be admitted by . . . the Vestry, provided that nothing justly can be alleged against their walk in life; . . . especially when . . . they are seeking their salvation.

7th. Forasmuch as the difference of people and denominations end in Christ . . . it becomes our duty, according to the gospel, to commune with, and admit to the Lord's table, professors, to whatever order, or sort, of the Christian church they belong . . .



13th. No preacher can stay among us who teacheth the doctrine of predestination, or the impossibility of falling from grace . . .

14th. No preacher can stay among us who will not . . . CARE for the various churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, which churches, under the superintendence of William Otterbein, stand in fraternal unity with us . . .

From Arthur C. Core, *Philip William Otterbein: Pastor, Ecumenist*, (Dayton: Board of Publication EUB Church, 1968), pp. 109-12. © Used by permission of Abingdon Press.

Telescope-Messenger

is published twice yearly by the Center
for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage
United Theological Seminary, 1810 Harvard Blvd.
Dayton, OH 45406-4599

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EUBS IN METHODIST HISTORY

by Donald K. Gorrell

Former EUBs who wonder whether their tradition has a recognizable place in the Methodist movement can be assured that Evangelical and United Brethren origins and role are part of Methodist history. This is evident in the recently published *Historical Dictionary of Methodism* (Lanham, MD and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1996) edited by Charles Yrigoyen, Jr. and Susan B. Warrick, General and Associate Secretaries of the General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church.

In this volume there are a dozen personal biographies from our movement, six Evangelical and six United Brethren. Most were early founders: UBs **Philip William Otterbein**, **Martin Boehm**, **Christian Newcomer** and Evs **Jacob Albright**, **George Miller**, **John Dreisbach**, **John Seybert**. One late nineteenth-century leader from each tradition also is included: Ev. Bishop **Reuben Yeakel** and UB Bishop **Milton Wright**. And three women are listed: UBs **Sarah Ann Dickey** and **Ella Niswonger** and Ev. **Susan Bauernfeind**.

Throughout Methodist history there have been many schisms and some unions. Those affecting the Ev. and UB traditions produced six distinct bodies that have individual articles in the book: **Evangelical Association/Evangelical Church**, **Evangelical Congregational Church**, **Evangelical United Brethren Church**, **United Brethren in Christ, Church of**, **United Brethren in Christ (Old Constitution)** and **United Methodist Church**.

Additional references to our heritage are found in major articles on **Episcopacy**, **Ordination**, **Presiding Elders** and **Laity Rights** as well as those on **Faith**, **Missions**, **Music**, **Worship** and **Antislavery Movement**.

An eleven-page **Chronology** includes EUB persons and events. And our heritages' histories, biographies, autobiographies and authors are included in the volume's fifty-page **Bibliography**.

Four of the thirty-seven contributors to the *Historical Dictionary of Methodism* are products of our heritages, three seminary professors with EUB

origins (**Donald K. Gorrell, J. Steven O'Malley, K. James Stein**) and one pastor-historian of the United Brethren in Christ (Old Constitution) (**Daryl M. Elliot**). While each wrote on some phase of EUB tradition, some also wrote on Methodist topics. The small number of writers was proportional to the EUB percentage in the 1968 union when 750,000 EUBs joined 10,000,000 Methodists to form The United Methodist Church. Although our contribution to United Methodism has limited dimensions, EUBs are a recognized part of the whole. Within the admitted major focus on Methodism in North America in this book our tradition has a fair share.

AUDRIE E. REBER MEMORIAL AWARD

Ellen E. King (UTS, 1998) is the recipient of the Audrie E. Reber Memorial Award for the best student paper on some aspect of Evangelical United Brethren history, theology or church life. Ms. King's paper on "Myrtle M. Lefever: A Biography" describes the career of a missionary who devoted her life to the South China Mission of the United Brethren and EUB Churches. Her well-written, thoroughly documented essay is a substantial study based on primary sources such as Lefever's personal diary and other papers, and oral interviews with missionary colleagues and family. A copy of this paper has been added to the seminary library's collection. A shorter article by King on the origins of UB women's missionary work in South China will appear in a future issue of the *Telescope-Messenger*.

BOARD INSPIRES SCHOLARLY SESSION

A discussion among Center Board members at the March meeting led Prof. **Steven O'Malley** of Asbury Seminary to organize a session on "The Role and Influence of German Ethnic Churches in America through the First World War," for January 7, 1999, at the meeting of the American Society of Church History in Washington, D.C. Of the four papers in the three-hour session, two deal directly with the EUB heritage. Dr. **K. James Stein** of Garrett-Evangelical, Board member, describes the impact of the German Pietist emphasis on New Birth upon union efforts in the Evangelical, United Brethren and Methodist traditions; while Dr. O'Malley illustrates the influence of Pietist motifs on the missionary thrust of the Evangelical Association. Other papers deal with Dunkards and Lutherans. This program offers a rich resource for all German-American Christianity, but particularly for the EUB heritage. Contact Jim Nelson, Center Director, for information.

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ANECDOTAGE

This year as former EUBs celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of church union that created the United Methodist Church in April 1968, some of Bishop Reuben H. Mueller's memories of that event in an oral history interview in 1980 are worth calling to mind. He said:

... I was very much involved in the negotiations toward union with the United Brethren Church, but I was much more involved in the negotiations for union with the Methodist Church, because I was then chairman of the Committee on Union of the EUB Church, and when we met with the Methodist representatives, I became Co-Chairman of the joint committee along with a Methodist bishop who was their chairman; I josh them sometimes now that during the negotiating periods until we got the church union, I wore out three Methodist bishops . . .

... It was a wonderful experience for me to be associated with these people in the church union organization . . . I bear witness to the fact that through all the negotiations there were never any acrimonious words. There was a spirit of seeking for Christian unity and a wonderful spirit of concession, particularly on the part of the Methodist leadership, for we were the smaller unit and we felt there were some things we didn't dare propose; then one of them would come up and propose it. Or take the "United" Methodist Church [name] -- we told them very frankly we were not asking for the word "United," and if they chose it, not to say that it came from the United Brethren name. It came because it stood for what we wanted -- that is -- a sort of invitation for all other Methodists to come in to this union, and that stands today . . .

Well, we had our union in Dallas, Texas, in 1968, and it was my privilege to be the EUB representative, and Bishop Wicke was the Methodist representative at that great service . . . I had the privilege of becoming sort of a symbol of the union, and I have never regretted it. I was for it then, and I'm for it still today. There are some things that I couldn't bless today, but that's because I'm getting to be an old man, and I don't like how some of the younger fellows do things.

When the interviewer asked, "So that basically, the leadership of the church was for it?" Bishop Mueller responded: "That's right. And I think the rank and file of the church came around pretty good too." He told of a District meeting in Hammond, Indiana, where a man said:

'Bishop, give me one good reason for uniting with the Methodists.' And I waited a minute, and then I said, 'Well, do you know an easier, quicker, way to take in ten million members all at once?' And the crowd gave him the horse-laugh and he sat down and never opened his mouth again . . . I told this story from Hammond [at other places] and those people never forgot that, because wherever I went after I became a United Methodist, I heard that story.

Reuben H. Mueller, Oral Interview, Dec. 15, 1980, UTS Library

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